



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP)

Implementation Workshop Reminder

Date: Monday, June 8

Time: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Location: State Capitol, Room 422, Helena

Lunch: Provided in the Rotunda

Purpose: To provide a forum for Interoperability Montana's stakeholders to continue implementation of SCIP initiatives.

- See how Montana's plan aligns with the National one.
- Brainstorm success factors
- Look at best practices
- Discuss sustainability issues and planning
- Glean innovative and useful ideas from experts

Big Sky 11 Consortium Preparing for the Future

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

Although most Big Sky 11 sites are not in the current round of trunking implementation, Project Director Floyd Fisher, Golden Valley County, and technical committee representative, Mike Linder, are preparing the group for the future. Mike Linder reviewed the updated fleet mapping spreadsheet and strategies for counties and individual agencies to use this to obtain critical radio information. This information is not only needed for fleet mapping, but also for budgeting for future grant applications and requests for subscriber units. The group hopes to collect this data before September.

Progress on site construction progress is a big concern. All PSIC-funded sites are prepared and ready to go, pending the stalled Department of Commerce and Homeland Security approval of submitted NEPA documents. If these are not approved within 30 to 60 days, the project risks missing an entire construction season on high mountain sites. Floyd Fisher, Project Manager Sherry Evans, and PSSB will follow up on this issue.

The next Big Sky 11 meeting is Thurs., June 25, at the Fire Station #1/EOC, 2300 9th Ave N. in Billings. The technical committee meets at 8:30, while the consortium meeting begins at 10:00 am.

Project North Star Meeting June 9-10

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

A Project North Star meeting is taking place June 9-10 at the Great Falls, Montana Holiday Inn for local, state, tribal, federal and Canadian law enforcement members. Hosted by the U.S. Border Patrol, Great Falls Police Department, Cascade County Sheriff's Office, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, this cooperative program facilitates cooperation and information sharing between United States and Canadian law enforcement and border security agencies.



The goal of Project North Star is to provide an effective method for local, state/provincial, tribal and federal law enforcement agencies and associations to network, develop and exchange best practices, improve intelligence sharing and identify joint training opportunities. Presentations on active shooting incidents, interviewing violent extremists and air smuggling should prove relevant and interesting. In addition, attendees will nominate and elect law enforcement community members to serve as four Quad-Chairs representing four law enforcement areas: 1) U.S. federal; 2) U.S. state, local, and tribal; 3) Canadian federal, and 4) Canadian provincial, local, and tribal.

A registration fee is not being charged, so participants will be on their own for lunch and travel expenses. Interested persons are asked to notify Craig Jeffrey, Project North Star Western Conference Manager via fax (406) 262-5681, email craig.jeffrey@dhs.gov, or phone (406) 262-5604 of their participation.

Eastern Tier Meetings Productive

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the Eastern Tier consortium held their regular meeting on Wed., May 27 in Glendive, followed by an in-depth planning session. Butch Renders reported on the May 12 IM Project Directors meeting, and highlighted the appropriations request made to Senator Tester's office for \$3.2 million to fund subscriber units across the state and an microwave ring project in eastern Montana. He emphasized that volunteers for the Audit Committee are still being sought.

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Pam Crisafulli, Dawson County, reported that the regional FEMA Fire Grant was submitted by the deadline. Denny Palmer, Richland County, reported that the IMTC approved the building layout for the Second Master Controller. Denny is looking for an architect to complete the drawings. Commissioner Jim Skillestad reported on pending appraisal work.

During the work session, Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, and Carl Hotvedt, Public Safety Services Bureau Chief reviewed all funding related to the Eastern Tier, including allocations from Dept. of Homeland Security FY08 and FY09 funding as well as legislative appropriations and master control site funding. Members reviewed a detailed spreadsheet of where dollars are planned to be spent and identified urgent communications equipment needs. Kevin felt it was a very positive meeting that clearly identified needed infrastructure improvements and connectivity issues.

The next ETIC meeting is set for Wed., June 24, at the Dawson County Courthouse Community Room, 207 W. Bell, in Glendive.

Northern Tier Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Northern Tier Interoperability Consortium (NTIC) met in Havre on Thurs., June 4. Sheridan County DES Coordinator, Curtis Petrik, served as the proxy Project Director and began the meeting with a microwave status update by Roger Smith, IM Radio System Administrator.

Roger explained the status of the Harris-Stratex contract and remaining items that are pending, such as RJ-45 termination jacks and the interface between building alarms and the microwave system. The MUX at Windy Hill is in the process of being purchased. The system's bit error rate has been problematic. The contract states that 99.999% of the time, the path will be up and running without errors. The contract will not be signed off on until this rate is met. Verification processes are taking place. Eclipse radios need to be updated with new software so they can interact with other radio brands on the system, which is anticipated to take place within the next six weeks. Roger explained how this upgrade will reduce microwave traffic and how it will provide for better monitoring of the microwave system. Access to high mountain sites due to spring snows has caused some delays.

Roger explained how U.S. Air Force summer construction plans will affect the eastern end of the Northern Tier. These microwave sites will provide additional redundancy. Some traffic outages are anticipated during this process.

Roger then updated the group on the status of the Motorola radio system, and reported on some excellent coverage results. Coverage Acceptance Testing (CAP) is scheduled in the far eastern portion of the Northern Tier beginning June 16. All sites on the Northern Tier, except King and Blue, have been updated to the 7.4 software upgrade.

Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol, and Roger Smith visited Daniels, Phillips, Roosevelt, Sheridan and Valley counties as well as with the Fort Peck Tribes to assist with fleet mapping. He expressed kudos to Sheriff Don Brostrom, Hill County, who helped Blaine County, Jack Spillman, Flathead County, who assisted Lincoln County and the Salish and Kootenai tribes, and Roger Hays and Sheriff Leo Dutton, Lewis and Clark County, who also provided resources and assistance on the fleet mapping effort. Roger Smith emphasized that all fleet mapping forms and documents are available on the <http://interop.mt.gov> website.

Roger explained processes for determining firmware version numbers and other radio status information needed for inventory sheets. These instructions will be written and posted to the website next week as well. It is essential to have accurate counts of all mobiles and portables that might need encryption, trunking and/or firmware upgrades.

In addition, Roger noted that most IM sites have antenna placement charts outlining where trunking antennas and public safety radio antennas should be located so they work optimally. He encouraged everyone to consult those charts or check with an IM member before antennas are placed to avoid the time and cost involved with having to move them if they are not placed correctly. The next Northern Tier meeting will be held at 9:00 am on Thurs., July 9 in Havre.

Upcoming Meetings

June 8

SCIP Implementation Workshop

Helena • 9:00 am - 4:00 pm • State Capitol, Room 422

June 9

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

June 10

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Stanford • 10:00 am

Judith Basin Courthouse, 31 1st Ave.

June 9-10

Project North Star Meeting

Great Falls Holiday Inn • 8:00 am - 4:30 pm